

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 65 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend Claims 66, 69, 71, 72, 78 and 79 as shown below. The claims, as currently pending in the application, read as follows.

64. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus for printing an image on a printing medium employing an ink-jet printing head capable of ejecting ink supplied from an ink tank, comprising:

negative-pressure loading means which is able to introduce negative pressure into the ink tank;

ink-supplying means for supplying ink into the ink tank using the negative pressure in the ink tank;

gas-liquid separating means which lies in a negative-pressure loading passage between the ink tank and the negative-pressure loading means and which permits gas to pass but inhibits ink from passing; and

~~disrupting means capable of disrupting a midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage between the ink tank and the gas-liquid separating means.~~

66. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the disrupting means has a connecting portion which releasably connects with the midcourse portion releasable.

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67. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, further comprising:

moving means for moving the ink tank, wherein the disrupting means connects the midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage when the ink tank is moved to a predetermined ink-supplying position, and disrupts the midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage when the ink tank is moved away from the predetermined ink-supplying position.

68. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 67, wherein the moving means moves the ink-jet printing head together with the ink tank.

69. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is moved between ~~the~~ a position for communicating with the inside of the ink tank and ~~the~~ a position for never communicating with the inside of the ink tank.

70. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, further comprising:

wiping means for wiping the gas-liquid separating means.

71. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is ~~an~~ a gas-permeable membrane ~~made~~

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of a material selected from comprising a tetrafluoride ethylene resin and other a porous resin membrane materials.

72. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the ink-jet printing head is provided with electrothermal-converting elements that generate thermal energies as energies of to eject ink.

77. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is provided with a member made of a porous material with an oil repellent finish.

78. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 77, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is an a gas-permeable membrane made of a material selected from comprising a tetrafluoride ethylene resin, a polyolefin resin, and other a porous resin membrane materials; which is subjected to an the oil-repellent finish.

79. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 77, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is an a gas-permeable membrane made of a material selected from comprising porcelain, unglazed pottery, ceramic, and other a porous materials; which is subjected to an the oil-repellent finish.